

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 L-03 FRB-03 OMB-01 ITC-01

SP-02 USIA-06 AGR-05 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 OIC-02 SIL-01 STR-04 TRSE-00 CIEP-01

CEA-01 AF-08 ARA-06 EA-07 NEA-10 /110 W

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R 261045Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9432

INFO USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN, UNCTAD, AU

SUBJECT: UNCTAD COMMODITY CONSULTATIONS: U.S. VIEWS ON THE
ROLE OF UNCTAD SECRETARIAT

REF: STATE 208183

1. DRAWING ON REFTTEL, WE PRESENTED USG VIEW ON UNCTAD'S
ROLE IN COMMODITY CONSULTATIONS TO MINISTER WALTHER
BACKES, HEAD OF MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
IN FOREIGN MINISTRY. BACKES SAID THAT GOA SYMPATHIZED
WITH US CONCERNS ON ALL THREE POINTS RAISED, I.E.
QUESTIONS OF PARTICIPATION, MAXIMUM UTILIZATION OF
EXISTING FORUMS, AND EARLY ESTABLISHMENT OF AD HOC
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATING GROUP. AT THE SAME
TIME, SPEAKING FROM WHAT HE TERMED A "DEVIL'S
ADVOCATE" POSITION, BACKES SAID THAT HE SAW DANGER
THAT LDCS MIGHT INTERPRET US MOVES AS EFFORT TO
DELAY COMMODITY NEGOTIATIONS AND TO "GO BACK" ON
NAIROBI AGREEMENT ON AN INTEGRATED COMMODITY PROGRAM.

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2. BACKES FELT THAT LDCS, AS MATTER OF PRINCIPLE, WOULD INSIST ON HAVING CONSULTATIONS OPEN TO FULL UNCTAD MEMBERSHIP. HE DID NOT VIEW THIS AS MAJOR PRACTICAL PROBLEM, HOWEVER, SINCE LDCS WITH ONLY MARGINAL INTEREST DID NOT HAVE RESOURCES TO PERMIT ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD.

3. ON QUESTION OF MAXIMUM UTILIZATION OF EXISTING COMMODITY FORUMS, BACKES THOUGHT THAT USG WOULD ALSO ENCOUNTER STRONG LDC RESISTANCE. BACKES SAID THAT A MAJOR REASON FOR LDC INSISTENCE ON AN INTEGRATED COMMODITY PROGRAM WAS DISSATISFACTION WITH WAY THINGS WERE GOING IN EXISTING, INDEPENDENT FORUMS. IN BACKES' VIEW, USG WOULD HAVE TO MAKE CLEAR THAT ITS PROPOSALS IN THIS AREA WERE MEANT IN THE INTEREST OF IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND NOT AN ATTEMPT TO SIDETRACK WORK TOWARD AN INTEGRATED COMMODITY PROGRAM.

4. WITH REGARD THIRD POINT, BACKES THOUGHT USG HAD STRONG POSITION, BASED ON TEXT OF NAIROBI RESOLUTION, TO CALL FOR EARLY ESTABLISHMENT AND MEETING OF AD HOC COORDINATING GROUP. HE FELT THAT IF PRESSED, LDCS WOULD PROBABLY YIELD ON THIS POINT.

5. COMMENT: BACKES' REMARKS ARE IN LINE WITH GENERAL AUSTRIAN POLICY OF ACCEPTING CONCEPT OF AN INTEGRATED COMMODITY PROGRAM, ALTHOUGH NOT THE INTEGRATED COMMODITY PROGRAM ORIGINALLY PUT FORWARD BY THE LDCS. AUSTRIANS ARE VERY INTERESTED IN SEEING CONSTRUCTIVE NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE ON COMMODITIES (AND OTHER MATTERS) CONTINUE AND SEE THEMSELVES AS SOMETHING OF A BRIDGE IN THIS EFFORT DESPITE THEIR EXCLUSION FROM CIEC. SINCE NAIROBI BACKES, OTHERS IN FOREIGN MINISTRY AND FOREIGN ASSISTANCE OFFICIALS IN FEDERAL CHANCELLERY HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN TO EMB. OFFS. THAT EXCESSIVELY TOUGH POSITIONS BY SOME DCS (US AND FRG ARE OFTEN MENTIONED) COULD STALL DIALOGUE AND BRING RETURN TO UNPRODUCTIVE PATTERN OF CONFRONTATION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, COMMODITIES, TRADE, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976VIENNA07108
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760325-1341
From: VIENNA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760815/aaaaamjx.tel
Line Count: 107
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 208183
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 MAR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <30 MAR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UNCTAD COMMODITY CONSULTATIONS: U.S. VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF UNCTAD SECRETARIAT
TAGS: EFIN, AU, US, UNCTAD
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006